the last three years has been as follows:

Year	No. of Plastic crates/cardboard boxes
1996-97	2,00,000
1997-98	18,000
1998-99	20,000

Review of Export Schemes

2032. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are taking a fresh look at some of the Export schemes to make them campatible with the WTO norms;

(b) if so, what are the details of such schemes; and

(c) whether it will involve fundamental restructuring?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Review of the Exim Policy and procedures is an ongoing process. The revised edition of the Export Import Policy and Hand Book of Procedures incorporating the latest changes in the Exim Policy and procedures is expected to be notified at the commencement of the next financial year.

Strengthening of Export-Oriented Units

2033. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Federation of Indian Export Organisations has suggested several measures to strengthen the base and content of Export-Oriented Units (BOU) and units set up in the export processing zones;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) whether suggestions for extending modvat credit EOUs and for simplification of various procedures for the benefit of EOUs have been received; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Suggestions have been received, including from Federation of Indian Export Organistions (FIEO), for change/ modifications in Chapter 9 of Export-Import Policy pertaining to Export oriented Units and units in Export Processing Zones.

(b) to (d) These suggestions would be kept in view while formulating proposals for amendment of the Export-import Policy.

Import of Sugar

2034. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that global sugar imports are likely to decrease by about 2 per cent this year;

(b) whether most of the countries have reduced their imports;

(c) whether it is a fact that our country has increased the imports;

(d) if so, the reasons for such increase in imports;

(e) whether Government propose to take steps to reduce import of sugar in our country;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) As per the Statistical Bulletin issued by the International Sugar Organisation, London, some countries have increased their imports while some have reduced it.

(c) and (d) It is true that the imports of sugar into India have increased substantially. As per current import-export Policy, import of sugar is free and such imports can be made by private parties as per their assessment of the market.

(e) to (g) The government has increased duty on imports of sugar from 5% to 20% ad valorem plus Rs. 850 per tonne with effect from 13.1.99. In the Finance Bill 1999, the Government has proposed a customs duty of 25% ad valorem plus Rs. 850 per tonne on sugar.

Production of Cashew

2035. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to change licensing laws so that corporate houses can be attracted to take up cashew production;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to improve quality and exports of natural products, including tea and cashew nuts?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government agencies are implementing various developmental schemes to enhance production, quality and export of natural products including tea and cashew nuts. Some of the steps taken include the provision of assistance for acquisition of latest packaging technology which fulfil international standards, participation in trade fairs/ exhibitions abroad, conducting publicity campaigns, organising Buyer-Seller Meets, promoting brands, etc. and assisting in the establishment of a quality testing laboratory in Question for cashew.

Steps to Promote Rubber Cultivation in Orisa

2036. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a vast scope to promote rubber cultivation in Orissa;

(b) if so, the steps taken in that direction during Eighth Plan;

(c) the assistance extended by the Central Government to the States for rubber plantation in Eighth Plan;

(d) the schemes proposed and fund earmarked for the purpose in the Ninth Plan; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The exploratory surveys conducted by the Rubber Board indicate that in about 200,000 ha., in identified pockets, agro-climatic conditions are moderately suitable for planting rubber in Orissa.

(b) In Orissa, the rubber Board has started raising block rubber plantation in land owned by tribal people in a limited extent. Upto the VIII Plan period, 277 ha. has been brought under rubber planting in Orissa. For development of rubber and to provide financial and extension support to the growers, the Board has set up offices in Dhankanal, Bhubneshwar, Naripada and Parlakhemundi in Orissa.

(c) to (e) The Central Govt. is not giving any financial assistance to the State Govts. for planting rubber. However, Government of India through Rubber Board has been implementing various ongoing schemes such as planting grant, cost of planting material, irrigation, smoke house construction, purchase of rubber sheeting roller, boundary protection material etc. for providing financial & extension support to the growers directly. In addition free training is also imparted to needy growers on all aspects of rubber cultivation.